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REMARKS

Claims 11, 12, and 22 through 35 were presented for consideration in the present application. The instant amendment cancels claims 11 and 12. Thus, claims 22 through 35 remain pending upon entry of the instant amendment, which is respectfully requested.

Claims 23 through 25, 31, and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. Claims 23 through 25 have been amended to change "collar" to "sealing ring". Claim 31 has been amended to remove the collar limitation. Claim 35 has been amended to change "collar" to "finished seal".

It is respectfully submitted that these amendments obviate the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112. Reconsideration and withdrawal are requested.

Claims 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,062,910 to Garcera et al (Garcera '910) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,894,104 to Garcera et al. (Garcera '104) in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,894,070 to Keidel et al. (Keidel). Claims 11 and 12 have been cancelled without prejudice rendering this rejection moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal are requested.

Claims 22 and 26 through 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Keidel. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that Fig. 3b of Keidel teaches a ceramic filter element having a main part and a terminal region having a smaller diameter than the main part.

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Claim 22 now recites "a plurality of flow channels passing unrestricted through said main part and said at least one terminal region". Support for this amendment can be found at least in Figure 3.

Keidel provides porous ceramic filter tubes 14 and 15. Each tube 14, 15 provides a single flow path as clearly illustrated Fig. 3b. Tube 15 has an extension portion 16 that is narrower than the tube 15, and serves to receive tube 14. See col. 4, lines 38-40. Thus, Keidel provides a porous ceramic filter tubes having a single flow path that has a narrower internal dimension in the area of the reduced outer diameter.

It is submitted that Keidel does not disclose or suggest the plurality of flow channels now required by claim 22. Moreover, Keidel clearly does not disclose or suggest the plurality of flow channels that pass unrestricted through the main part and the at least one terminal region as provided by claim 22.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Keidel does not disclose claim 22 or claims 26 through 28 that depend therefrom. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 are respectfully requested.

Claims 22 and 26 through 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Garcera '104 in view of Keidel. Specifically, the Office Action acknowledges that Garcera '104 does not teach a filter element with a terminal region of smaller diameter. However, the Office Action asserts that Fig. 3b of Keidel

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teaches an element with a terminal region of smaller outer diameter.

As discussed above, claim 22 provides that "a plurality of flow channels passing unrestricted through said main part and said at least one terminal region". In contrast, Keidel provides an extension portion 16 that is narrower in both internal and external dimensions. Thus, the extension portion 16 of Keidel clearly does not have flow channels that pass unrestricted through both the main part and the terminal region as required by claim 22.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the proposed combination of Keidel and Garcera '104 does not disclose or suggest claim 22. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 22 and 26 through 28 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

Claims 23 through 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Garcera '104 in view of Keidel in further view of Garcera '910. It is believed that the amendments to claims 23 through 25 discussed above with respect to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112 also obviate this rejection. Specifically, claims 23 through 25 now recite "sealing ring" rendering this rejection under §103(a) moot.

In light of the above, claim 22, and claims 23 through 28 that depend therefrom, are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 29 through 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

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over Garcera '104 in view of Keidel. Again, the Office Action acknowledges that Garcera '104 does not teach a filter element with a terminal region of smaller diameter, but asserts that Fig. 3b of Keidel teaches such an element.

Claim 29 now recites, in part, "said smaller diameter being defined without restricting flow of the medium through said terminal region". Support for this amendment can be found at least in Figure 3.

As discussed above, Keidel provides porous ceramic filter tubes 14 and 15, where tube 15 has an extension portion 16 that is narrower than the tube 15, and serves to receive tube 14. See col. 4, lines 38-40. It is submitted that the narrower extension portion 16 of Keidel clearly restricts flow through the extension portion.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the proposed combination of Keidel and Garcera '104 does not disclose or suggest claim 29.

Claim 35 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Garcera '104 in view of Keidel in further view of Garcera '910. It is believed that present claim 35, as discussed above with respect to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, also obviates this rejection. Specifically, claim 35 now recites "finished seal" rendering moot this rejection under §103(a). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

In light of the above, claim 29 and claims 29 through 35 that depend therefrom are believed to be in condition for

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allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

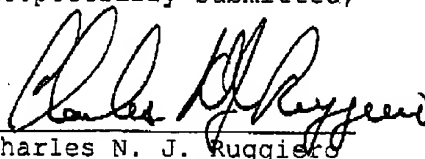
For at least the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Such action is most earnestly solicited.

In the alternative, it is believed that the instant amendment places the present application in better condition for appeal. According, entry and consideration of the instant amendment are respectfully requested.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with Applicants' attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number below for an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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